



# Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

Tampa                      Orlando                      Jacksonville  
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## **U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES SPECIAL AWARENESS MONTH**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that the Department of Justice has designated the entire month of April 2011 as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month." On a national level, nearly 19 million women and 3 million men have experienced at least one incident of sexual assault.<sup>1</sup> In 2009, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement reported 10,227 forcible sex offenses and 2,877 arrests. According to national researchers, approximately one out of every nine adult women in Florida has been the victim of forcible rape, which equates to over 700,000 women in Florida. Many victims fear disgrace if they tell family and friends about the abuse, and suffer alone. Victims of sexual assault who do not receive recovery services face serious risks to their health and well-being.<sup>2</sup> Sexual assault remains one of the most under reported crimes in America.<sup>3</sup>

Help is available through local sexual assault centers and, in a crisis situation,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.justice.gov>, "Attorney General Eric Holder Speaks at the Department of Justice's Sexual Assault Awareness Month Program", April 12, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> "The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund - Rape Crisis Services in Florida Report Issued by the Division of Family Health Services Sexual Violence Prevention Program", dated February 1, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates>, Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN).

through RAINN's (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) national routing number 1-800-656-HOPE (4673), which will automatically connect the caller to the nearest participating local rape crisis center. For additional information and resources on sexual violence, visit the National Sexual Violence Resource Center at <http://www.nsvrc.org>. For additional information on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, visit the Office on Violence Against Women at <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov>.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to honor victims and the advocates of victims' rights, also occurs in April, beginning on Sunday, April 10, 2011. This year's theme is *Reshaping the Future, Honoring the Past*.

For victims, reshaping the future can be accomplished through a variety of means, including counseling, financial assistance to bury a loved one or pay medical bills, participating in the criminal justice process, or being awarded restitution. For victim advocates, reshaping the future in these trying economic times means working more closely and creatively with other victim service providers. Honoring the past means recognizing the great strides made in establishing victims' rights at all levels – local, state, and federal. National Crime Victims' Rights Week will begin in Washington, D.C., at the Department of Justice's annual national Candlelight Observance Ceremony on April 7, 2011. For additional information about victims' rights, visit the Office of Victims of Crime website at <http://www.ovc.gov>.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida is committed to ensuring that victims of federal crime receive the support and assistance they need and deserve.